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# The Dynamic Relationship Between Protest and Repression

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This study contributes to our understanding of the dynamic relationship between protest and repression. It employs vector autoregressions to analyze daily data from six Latin American and three African countries from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. The results suggest that there is a reciprocal relationship between protest and repression and that protest is consistent over time. Democracies were found to be most likely to accommodate the opposition and, at the same time, were least likely to display continuous repressive behavior. However, if faced with popular dissent, democracies were just as likely to respond with negative sanctions as other regime types, whereas negative sanctions were particularly unsuccessful to solicit dissident cooperation in democracies.

There is an abundance of theorizing and empirical evidence on whether state repression increases or decreases the incidence of domestic protest. However, findings have been mixed, providing support for almost every possible relationship between protest and repression (e.g., Gurr 1986; Lichbach 1987; Moore 1998; Opp and Roehl 1990; Rasler 1996; Tilly 1978; Zimmerman 1980). This study reinvestigates the repression-protest nexus using data from Africa and Latin America between the late 1970s and early 1990s. By incorporating various elements into the analysis that have largely been neglected in previous work, it attempts to shed more light on how domestic dissent and state coercion interact with each other.

Most research on the protest-repression nexus can be divided into two groups: One group uses repression as independent variable and the other employs repression as dependent variable. The former group perceives regimes as being active, focusing on the effects repression has on rebellion and domestic protest (e.g., Francisco 1995, 1996; Hibbs 1973; Lichbach 1987; Moore 1998; Opp 1994; Opp and Roehl 1990; Rasler 1996; Tilly 1978). For example, Lichbach (1987) uses a rational actor model to analyze the dissidents' response to government repression. One of his main conclusions is that low levels of repression reduce oppositional violence and increase it after a certain threshold, whereas higher levels of government violence increase oppositional violence and decrease it after a certain threshold when anger gives away to fear. Lichbach's model also suggests that if governments repress non-violent activities, the opposition switches to violent tactics. Moore (1998) evaluates Lichbach's (1987) model using data from Peru and Sri Lanka between 1955 and 1991. He isolates specific sequences from the rest of the sample, where state repression followed either violent or non-violent protest and then

looks at the action that follows state repression. Using difference of mean tests, only the analysis of Sri Lanka supports Lichbach's argument. However, the main disadvantage of Moore's approach is its disregard of the time dimension. Violent protest, non-violent protest, and repression are isolated into moves and sequences. Moves and sequences that follow each other within a week are treated in the same way as those that occur within one year. In contrast, this work places particular importance on the timing of events. Also, as discussed in the following section, I do not treat violent and non-violent activities as completely separate events, but rather as being on different points on one continuum.

Francisco (1995) analyzes weekly data from the GDR, Czechoslovakia, and the Palestinian Intifada during the late 1980s to identify how government repression affects popular protest. He argues that the number of protesters depends on the level of coercion exercised by the government and that protesters adapt their strategies according to the level of repression they are faced with. His results support the backlash hypothesis, which argues that although extremely severe coercion might decrease protest temporarily, it increases dissident behavior in the long-run, particularly when repression is applied indiscriminately (Mason and Krane 1989).

The other group of research on the protest-repression nexus turns the direction of causality around and analyzes how governments react to dissent, using repression as the dependent variable (e.g., Davenport 1995; Gamson 1975; Gartner and Regan 1996; Gupta et al. 1993; Gurr and Lichbach 1986; Krain 1997; Mason and Krane 1989; Moore 2000). Several studies find that as protest becomes more violent and widespread, governments employ repression, but the response differs between different political regimes (e.g., Gupta, Singh, Sprague 1993; Gurr and Lichbach 1986). Moore (2000) concludes that when governments encounter domestic dissent, they exchange repressive strategies for accommodating behavior and accommodation for repression.

David and Ward (1990) employ an inductive approach to analyze the dynamics of domestic violent conflict. Using quarterly data from Chile, they find that government sanctions

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do not influence rebellion but that rebellion increases government sanctions. I follow their approach in analyzing the dynamics of the interaction by explicitly modeling the dynamic interdependence between these actions, arguing that they form a reciprocal relationship.<sup>1</sup>

The main argument of this study is that both protest and repression influence each other. If we want to find out why people protest against their governments, we ought to take into account how governments react towards them. Similarly, if we want to better understand why states limit political rights of their citizens, or even torture and kill them, we ought to investigate the behavior of the population towards their governments.

The second main contribution of this study is that cooperative behavior is added into the equation of protest and repression. Lichbach (1987: 294) concludes that in order to adequately analyze the repression-protest nexus, accommodating strategies should be included in the model. Previous research has largely focused on conflictual behavior without accounting for cooperative actions. This study investigates how accommodating behavior of one actor influences the hostile behavior of the other actor.

Previous studies have used highly aggregated data, such as quarterly or yearly data, to investigate the relationship between protest and repression (e.g., Davenport 1995; Gupta, Singh, and Sprague 1993; Muller and Weede 1990). However, when a government limits the freedom of the press, for example, the opposition, or journalists, usually do not wait six months or a year to respond, if they choose to respond at all. The interaction is much more immediate. To better reflect the dynamic interaction between the government and opposition forces I use daily data for the empirical analysis.

In short, this study focuses on the dynamic interdependence between protest and repression, while allowing for accommodating behavior of both the government and the opposition. To reflect the data generating process as closely as possible, I employ vector autoregression (VAR) to analyze daily events in six countries from Latin America and in three countries from sub-Saharan Africa over an approximately 12-year period between the late 1970s and the early 1990s,<sup>2</sup> comparing the interaction between protest and repression under different institutional settings.

The next section develops the model of domestic conflict and accommodation in more detail. Subsequently I introduce the data, which are taken from the Intranational Political Interactions (IPI) project by Davis, Leeds, and Moore (1998). This follows the discussion of the methodology and the empirical results. I conclude by summarizing the main findings and by outlining potential avenues for future research.

## A DYNAMIC MODEL OF DOMESTIC CONFLICT AND ACCOMMODATION

Domestic conflict is defined as any verbal or physical confrontation by domestic actors over political issues. Both protest and repression are understood in broad terms. Tarrow defines protest as "disruptive collective action that is aimed at institutions, elites, authorities, or other groups on behalf of the collective goals of the actors or of those they claim to represent" (1991: 11). I use a lightly modified version of this definition, defining protest as any confrontational activity by domestic non-governmental actors that disrupts and challenges any government actor, agency, or policy. This includes verbal threats, as well as non-violent and violent actions, since "group violence ordinarily grows out of collective actions which are not intrinsically violent. . . . Without them, the collective violence could hardly occur" (Tilly 1978: 74).

Repression incorporates a broad range of actions as well. It includes negative sanctions, such as restrictions on free speech, violations of life integrity rights, such as torture and political imprisonment, as well as widespread state terror in the form of genocide. Repression refers to all those actions, since "all address behavior that is applied by governments in an effort to bring about political quiescence and facilitate the continuity of the regime through some form of restriction or violation of political and civil liberties" (Davenport 2000: 6). In short, domestic political conflict comprises confrontational activities, violent and non-violent, that are either directed from the government at the population or directed from the population at the government. Since "violence ordinarily grows out of collective actions which are not intrinsically violent" (Tilly 1978: 74), both violent and non-violent activities are seen as being part of one continuum, rather than being two completely separate types of events. Therefore, I do not separate the activities into two categories, but rather place them on a scale from low intensity (e.g., non-violent) to high intensity (e.g., violent) activities. As such, violent and non-violent forms of coercion and dissent are not treated equally since they are placed at different point of the conflict scale.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from conflictual actions, actors can also choose to accommodate the opponent. Dissident accommodation refers to actions of the dissidents that accommodate the government. It ranges from supportive statements of the regimes to demonstrations for the government and declarations of cease-fires. Whenever a government actor accommodates a member of the population, it is labeled 'state accommodation'. It ranges from low-intensity (e.g., agreement to talk with the opposition) to high-intensity (e.g., ending civil war).<sup>4</sup>

The model of domestic political conflict rests on two assumptions. First, the state and the opposition are seen as

<sup>1</sup> The argument of reciprocity has been developed in particular with respect to international cooperation (Axelrod 1985; Goldstein et al. 2001; Leng 1984).

<sup>2</sup> Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela, Nigeria, Zaire, and Zimbabwe.

<sup>3</sup> Because violent and non-violent conflict is conceptualized as being part of one continuum, this study is not directly comparable to work that treats those as being discrete events.

<sup>4</sup> Of course, states can also choose to ignore oppositional activities.

unitary actors. The state is united in its aim to stay in power and to diminish the threat from potential or actual opponents. Both expressions, "the state" and "the government," refer to this unitary actor. The opposition is also seen as a unitary actor. It is united in the goal to bring about change in the government or its policies or to limit its power.

The second assumption is that both actors are perceived as being rational (e.g., Lichbach 1995; Oberschall 1994; Tarrow 1994; Taylor 1998). The behavior of the government and of the opposition results from cost-benefit calculations. The emphasis is on the political process, not on deprivation, frustration, or grievances. Within this framework, domestic political conflict is perceived as an inherently dynamic and reciprocal process.

### PROTEST AND REPRESSION

Both actors are expected to imitate each other's behavior similar to the tit-for-tat strategy (e.g., Axelrod 1985; Leng 1984). If the population is faced with repression, the citizens are most likely to respond with dissent. Similarly, if the government encounters protest, it is expected to respond with repression. The government and the opposition orientate their actions primarily on the observable behavior of the opponent because the situation under which both actors operate is marked by limited information, limited capabilities, and uncertain payoffs. Although both actors might be aware of each other's agenda, they will most likely have only limited information about their persistence and the resources available to them to pursue their goals. For example, dissidents often do not know whether hardliners or softliners are more powerful within the government. There is typically a significant amount of uncertainty about how much protest can be mobilized by the opposition forces. Hence, payoffs of certain strategies are usually uncertain. On this background, both actors use each other's behavior as guidance for their own actions.

When faced with government sanctions or coercion, dissidents are expected to respond with resistance. Analyzing the Iranian Revolution, Rasler (1996) argues that due to micromobilization processes protest increases in the long-run when faced with government sanctions. Micromobilization occurs because overt dissident behavior shows the willingness and commitment of others, it makes the goal of their activities desirable, and raises the social rewards for participating in the dissent movement (Chong 1991; Opp 1994; Opp and Roehl 1990).<sup>5</sup> Opp and Roehl argue "repression sets in motion 'micromobilization processes' that raise the rewards and diminish the costs of participation" (1990: 523).

The reaction of the government to dissident activities is expected to be similar to the response of dissidents to repression. If a government is faced with protest, it is likely to respond with coercion in order to reduce the threat posed

by such dissent. This is supported by previous research. For example, in a study on multi-dimensional threat perception and repression, Davenport (1995) finds that various characteristics of dissent, namely frequency of events, strategic variety, and deviation from the norm, increase repression.

The second argument that I wish to advance is that cooperation influences hostile actions. With some exceptions, accommodating behavior has largely been ignored in studies on the protest-repression nexus. Lichbach (1987) models the use of different government strategies and concludes that consistent policies, i.e., employing either coercion or accommodation decreases dissent, whereas inconsistent policies increase it because they send mixed messages to the opposition. Rasler (1996) finds support for the argument that government concessions increase protest. This hypothesis is based on the value-expectancy model, which states that if people expect protest to achieve the desired public good, they are more likely to participate in dissent activities (e.g., Muller and Opp 1986). If governments make concessions to the opposition, it raises the expectations that the opposition's goal will be achieved, which in turn encourages people to participate in dissent activities. Following this argument, I expect that accommodating state behavior increases dissent. Being confronted by a cooperative government lowers the costs of protest and potentially raises the benefits. Government accommodation can also be interpreted as a weakness that is to be taken advantage of in the form of popular dissent.

When dissidents show accommodating behavior, governments, on the other hand, are expected not to respond with repression since this might backfire and turn further sections of the population against the regime, as argued in the backlash hypothesis mentioned above. Repression also raises international costs, for example in the form of international shaming or sanctions. International costs are likely to be particularly high when governments repress an opposition that shows signs of cooperating with the regime. Hence, I expect that accommodation by dissidents does not lead to repression.

### THE IMPACT OF PAST BEHAVIOR

Both protest and repression are expected to be influenced by themselves (e.g., Davenport 1996; David and Ward 1990). Policy inertia dampens radical changes of the government's behavior. The government tends to maintain strategies once they have been adopted. Government agencies also try to perpetuate their existence. When special security forces are put into place to protect the national executive and to control dissident groups, they usually try to maintain their status and are therefore difficult to dissolve (see also Davenport 1996). For example, once Sese Seko Mobutu had installed his Civil Guard in 1984, the members of the Civil Guard did not want to lose their position and contributed to repressing dissidents to preserve their own interests. Therefore, repression at time  $t-1$  is expected to be followed by repression at time  $t$ .

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed discussion of micromobilization processes, see also McAdam et al. 1996 and McAdam 1988.

Protest movements tend to maintain itself as well. The threshold model suggests that once a certain, usually unspecified, threshold of number of participants is crossed, the costs of mobilizing a larger crowd decline. Once dissidents have successfully invested in organizing and carrying out dissent, the costs of maintaining momentum and sustaining protest decline. Similarly, the bandwagon model suggests that once a critical mass of protesters is achieved, more people are likely to join because they feel encouraged by the protesters' commitment and willingness to dissent (e.g., Muller and Opp 1986; Rasler 1996). Therefore, I expect that protest at time  $t-1$  is followed by protest at time  $t$ .

Various arguments made above, including the bandwagon model, the threshold model, and micromobilization processes, suggest that both protest and repression constantly increase. So why do we generally not expect to see them spiralling out of control? Escalation of repression is hindered by the costs and dangers of widespread and large-scale repression. As mentioned before, severe coercion carries domestic and international costs. It requires a well-equipped, loyal, and very large repressive apparatus, which is difficult and expensive to maintain. Indiscriminate continuous repression is likely to trigger a backlash and to increase resistance from the opposition (Francisco 1995). International costs include being subject to blaming and shaming by other countries and international organizations, as well as isolation and exclusion from international bodies and in extreme cases the termination of trade relations.<sup>6</sup>

There are also barriers to stop dissent from endlessly escalating. The most obvious one is the limited pool of potential protesters. Of course the realistic pool of potential dissidents is generally lower than the size of the population. And although people are more likely to join an already ongoing protest, if the group of dissidents grows extremely large, problems of coordination and communication start to kick in. Therefore, although both protest and repression are expected to maintain themselves in the short run, they are not expected to escalate or continue indefinitely.

#### REGIME TYPE AS CONDITIONING FACTOR

The dynamics of domestic conflict and cooperation are likely to differ under different institutional settings. Political regimes set the rules of the game and shape the interaction between government and opposition. They determine the choices of the actors and the costs attached to those choices. Authoritarian regimes usually do not have institutionalized channels that accommodate popular discontent and opposition. The norms and institutions that are in place in democracies are designed to facilitate compromise and cooperation. This tends to keep the level of conflict comparatively low. I distinguish between three categories: democracies,

semi-democracies, and non-democracies (also called 'autocracies' and 'authoritarian regimes' in the following). These labels refer to the degree of political participation and competition (Dahl 1971).

I expect that in democracies repression is less likely to follow protest than in other regimes. Democracies are not only institutionally restrained to use repression or negative sanctions, but democratic norms also favor dialogue when faced with opposition. Democracies are also less likely to perceive domestic dissent as a threat (Davenport 1999). As such they are expected to be less likely to reciprocate popular protest with repression (e.g., Rummel 1997).

With respect to the impact of repression on protest, I expect that in democratic regimes people are more likely to reciprocate repression with dissent than in other regimes. In countries with democratic institutions, citizens enjoy a certain set of rights and protection from the government. When a government steps over the line, the population is likely to protest against the infringement of their rights and liberties. Additionally, due to democratic norms of non-violent conflict resolution, the costs of dissent are expected to be lower in democracies than in non-democracies. I expect that in authoritarian regimes repression is less likely to systematically lead to protest. Autocratic regimes are inherently less prone to accommodate demands of their citizens since their institutions and procedures are set up to avoid popular accountability and responsiveness. Therefore, the benefits of dissent are likely to be low, while the costs of protest as a response to repression are probably very high.

Finally, accommodating state behavior is expected to be most consistent in democracies compared to other regimes. Because of the democratic norms and institutions mentioned above, accommodation of the opposition should be a more constant feature of government actions than in non-democracies.

To sum up, I expect that, in general, the opposition responds with protest to repression and that the government responds with repression to protest and that both types of conflictual behaviors are autoregressive. Taking into account differences between regime types, democracies are hypothesized to be less likely than other regimes to see repression as a response to protest, but more likely to experience protest as a response to repression, while autocracies are argued to be less likely to experience protest when employing repression. Additionally, accommodating state behavior is expected to be autoregressive in democracies. Overall dissidents are expected to respond to state accommodation with protest, whereas governments are expected not to display conflictual actions when faced with dissident accommodation.

#### OVERVIEW OF THE DATA

I use data from the Intranational Political Interactions (IPI) Project (Davis, Leeds, and Moore 1998; Moore 1998, 2000). The IPI project measures intrastate political conflict and cooperation on a ten-point scale by coding news

<sup>6</sup> Moore (2000) comes to a similar conclusion by arguing that high levels of repression are usually followed with lower levels of repression, which effectively counterbalances the tendency for conflicts to spiral out of control.

≡ TABLE 1  
DETAILS OF CONFLICT VARIABLES

Original Value	Weight	Description
-1	-4.12	Group X criticizes Government Y's new policy
-2	-7.88	Government X rejects opposition Group Y's proposals for reform.
-3	-12.71	Group X demonstrates non-violently against Government Y.
-4	-28.82	Group Y riots in response to Government X's policies (property damage, 0 deaths).
-5	-32.12	Group Y riots in response to Government X's policies (property damage, 0 deaths).
-6	-60.18	Government X fires into crowd of Group X protesters (40 deaths)
-7	-63.65	Election violence in region Z between Government X and Group Y (100 deaths)
-8	-70.12	Government X suspends the national constitution. Population Y is effected.
-9	-85.18	Group X violently topples President Y's government; X installs itself in power.
-10	-90.71	Government X executes hundreds of members of Group Y.

Note: Adapted from Shellman (2004).

sources.<sup>7</sup> It identifies the actor, target, and intensity of the events, which are listed by the date of occurrence. One can identify who is doing what to whom on a daily basis. The data cover nine middle powers from Latin American and Africa between 1974 and 1992. They include a broad spectrum of state actors, such as the executive, the military, paramilitary forces, and the police. They also identify a variety of non-state actors, such as specific ethnic populations, dissident organizations, labor unions, and churches. The data capture a wide breadth of conflictual behavior, ranging from non-violent, low-confrontational actions to large-scale killings and civil war.<sup>8</sup>

The nine Latin American and African countries represent an interesting selection of cases for the purpose of this research. The variables on protest and repression vary substantially both within and between the countries. The countries cover the whole spectrum of authoritarian and democratic regimes; some of them have experienced more regime changes than others during the time period of observation. I do not pool the data since I am interested in the events and interactions within each state.<sup>9</sup>

The IPI Scale codes news sources ranging from -1 to -10 for conflictual and 1 to 10 for accommodating behavior. The conflict scale includes mildly negative statements (-1), riots (-4), as well as civil war (-10). The cooperation scale ranges from statements of support (1), to agreements to talk (4), to conflict resolution (10). For the analysis I transform these ordinal-level data into interval-like data based on Shellman (2004). Shellman asked experts to rank a list of events taken from the original IPI scale from least to most cooperative and from least to most hostile and then to assign each event a weight from 1 to 100. The final scales consist of the average weights assigned by the experts. Table 1 shows the

original value, the weight and the description of the ranked conflictual events.<sup>10</sup>

I create four new variables for each of the nine countries, two variables for hostile events and two for accommodating actions, depending on who the actor and who the target is. The variable measuring hostile actions of the government towards the population is labeled "repression," the one measuring hostile actions of the population towards the government is labeled "protest." Those two variables are multiplied by -1 to arrive at positive values, with higher values indicating more severe conflict. The third variable is labeled "dissident accommodation" and captures accommodation of the government by the opposition, and "state accommodation" measures accommodating actions by the government. The activities are measured on a daily basis.<sup>11</sup> If more than one event is recorded for one of the four variables, I only use the most severe one, i.e., the most accommodating or the most hostile event. As argued above, violent and non-violent conflictual actions are seen as part of one continuum, rather than two separate forms of dissent since violent forms of both repression and protest usually grows out of non-violent and less violent confrontation.

#### DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN DEMOCRACIES, SEMI-DEMOCRACIES, AND AUTOCRACIES

To account for the potentially very different dynamics between protest and repression under different institutional settings, I estimate the models separately for democratic, semi-democratic, and autocratic regimes.<sup>12</sup> I create a number of sets from each country, so that within a set the Polity-value

<sup>7</sup> Reuters North American Service, Reuters World Service, The New York Times Index, and the Africa Research Bulletin.

<sup>8</sup> See <http://garnet.acns.fsu.edu/~whmoore/ipi/ipi.html>.

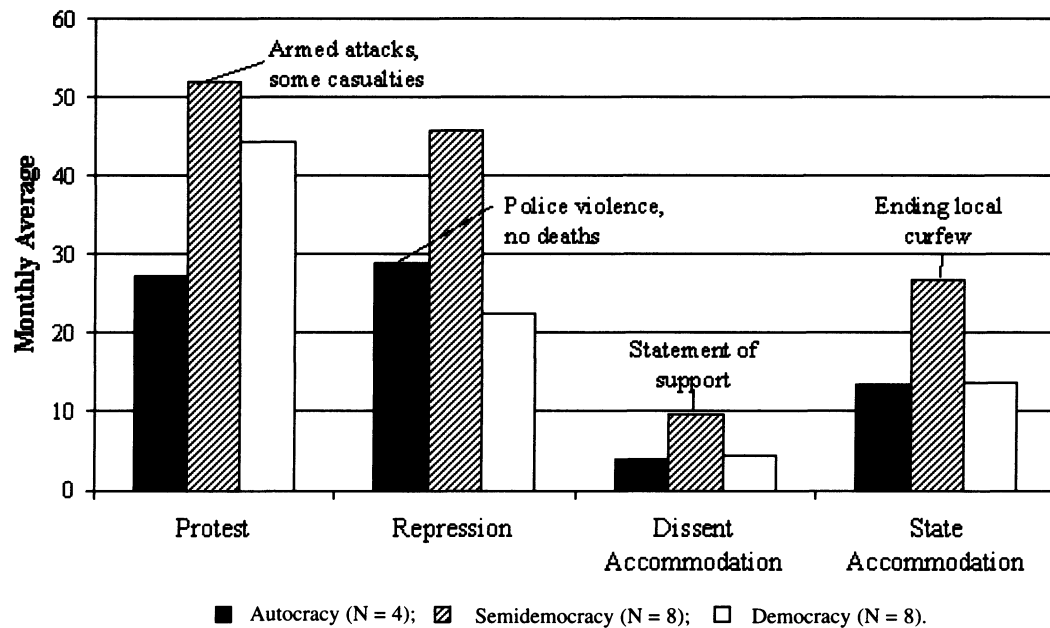
<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of these countries, including their main socio-economic characteristics, see Carey (2003).

<sup>10</sup> For a detailed discussion of this transformation, see Shellman (2004).

<sup>11</sup> I also performed the analysis with quarterly aggregated data. This did not substantially alter the results.

<sup>12</sup> VARs are also based on the assumption that the relationships between the variables are stable across the time period. This is an unreasonable assumption for a country that undergoes a regime change, which is also shown by statistical stability tests.

FIGURE 1  
AVERAGE MONTHLY VALUES OF COERCION AND ACCOMMODATION



Note: Colombia is excluded in this graph because of the high levels of protest and repression due to the conflict between the government and the drug cartel.

from the Polity IVd dataset (Marshall and Jagers 2001) is consistent. The Polity scale combines the variables measuring democracy and autocracy and ranges from -10 very autocratic (-10) to very democratic (+10). I collapse those sets of one country together, where the Polity difference is of the value 1.<sup>13</sup> Whenever the Polity variable changes by more than one value, it starts a new set for the analysis, using the exact day of the change. For example, in the case of Nigeria, the IPI data range from January, 1983, to December, 1992. The Polity variable takes on three different values between this time period, creating three subsets for Nigeria. The first one covers the time span from January 1, 1983, to December 31, 1983. During this time, the value of the Polity variable is seven, indicating the broadly democratic structure of the Second Republic under President Shagari. The second set ranges from January 1, 1984, to May 3, 1989, with the value of the Polity variable equal to -7. This represents the authoritarian rule of Generals Mohammed Buhari and Ibrahim Babangida. The third set covers the period from May 4, 1989, to the end of the dataset on December 31, 1992, also under Babangida. The value of the Polity variable during this time is -5, indicating a semi-democracy that allowed for some participation and competition in the form of political parties. For every country, the cut-off points are based on the Polity scale, as described in the example for Nigeria. The Appendix shows the sets, listing their labels, the time period over which each set spans, as well as the corresponding Polity value. Every country-set with the Polity value between

7 and 10 is labeled "democracy," with the value between -6 and 6 "semi-democracy" and "autocracy" between -7 and -10. The sample consists of six democracies, eight semi-democracies, and four autocracies. Eleven sets are from Latin America and seven from Africa.

Figure 1 shows the level of protest, repression, dissident, and state accommodation in an average month, plus some examples of the kinds of events represented by the numerical value. The graph shows that semi-democracies experience the most intense events compared to democracies and autocracies. Autocracies seem to have been effective in preventing overt dissent, showing the lowest level of protest, while being less repressive than semi-democracies but more repressive than democracies. As expected, democracies have the lowest level of repression, but surprisingly both democracies and autocracies experience the same levels of dissident and state accommodation.

#### ANALYZING DOMESTIC CONFLICT AND ACCOMMODATION

To analyze the daily interactions of the repression-protest nexus I employ vector autoregression (VAR) (Freeman 1983; Freeman, Williams, and Lin 1989; Sims 1987).<sup>14</sup> This approach allows me to address the "inadequate conception

<sup>13</sup> Chile and Zaire differ from this rule due to autocorrelation in the errors.

<sup>14</sup> For another application of VAR in analyzing reciprocity, see David and Ward (1990) and Moore (1995), but also Goldstein et al. (2001) and Enders and Sndlers (1993) for the use of VAR in analyzing antiterrorism policies. For the statistical analysis I use the natural log of all four variables due to their skewed distribution. Since the natural log cannot be taken from 0, I add 0.5 to every variable because  $\ln(x) \approx \ln(x + 0.5)$ .

≡ TABLE 2  
SUMMARY OF F-TESTS

Polity	DV Granger Cause	Protest				Repression				Dissident Accommodation				State Accommodation			
		P	R	DA	SA	P	R	DA	SA	P	R	DA	SA	P	R	DA	SA
-8	Argentina I	X			X		X				X				X	X	
7/8	Argentina II	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X				X
-3	Brazil I	X			X	X	X		X	X				X	X	X	X
7/8	Brazil II	X	X			X		X							X		
-6	Chile I	X	X				X					X	X			X	X
-1	Chile II														X		
8	Chile III	X	X						X						X		
8/9	Colombia I	X				X	X		X			X				X	X
-3	Mexico I	X	X			X	X			X				X	X		
0	Mexico II	X	X	X		X		X		X							
9/8	Venezuela I	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X		X
7	Nigeria I	X	X		X	X	X		X					X	X		X
-7	Nigeria II	X		X		X	X	X		X					X		
-5	Nigeria III	X	X				X				X				X		
-9	Zaire I	X	X	X	X	X	X		X						X		X
-8	Zaire II	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4/5	Zimbabwe I	X	X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
1	Zimbabwe II	X				X	X										
	TOTAL (18)	17	12	6	6	13	14	5	8	8	5	5	4	6	13	6	8
	Percentages	94	67	33	33	72	78	28	44	44	28	28	22	33	72	33	44

Note: X = F-test for the lags of this variable was statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ; DV = Dependent Variable; P = Protest, R = Repression; DA = Dissident Accommodation; SA = State Accommodation.

and treatment of dynamics . . . , inaccurate conception of causality . . . , refusal to deal with what are reciprocal (endogenous), multivariate causal political variable . . . and the use of highly cross-sectional and temporally aggregated measure of political variables" (Brandt and Freeman 2002: 2), which Brandt and Freeman have identified as being some of the main shortcomings of policy evaluation research. For the analysis I use 18 sets, estimating 18 different VAR models. In each model every endogenous variable is regressed on a constant, its own lagged values, and on the lagged values of all other endogenous variables in the system. The lag lengths are specified using the Akaike and Schwartz criterion. The lags vary for the different sets, with the average lag length being 8.7 days. F-tests are used to determine whether the inclusion of the lagged values increases the ability to predict the values of the variables on the left-hand side of the equation.<sup>15</sup>

Table 2 summarizes the results of the F-tests based on the VAR models for the 18 sets.<sup>16</sup> The first line in the top row lists

the dependent variable of the four regressions and the second line contains the initials of the independent variables, i.e., the lags of which are tested to improve the prediction of the dependent variable. Where the F-test of one variable was found to be statistically significant at a level of  $p < 0.05$ , it was noted with an X in the table. The last row summarizes the results of the F-tests across all sets. The first line in the last row lists the total number of sets in which that particular variable was found to improve the prediction of the dependent variable, below this are the corresponding percentages.

I argued above that protest follows repression and that repression follows protest. The results support this in the majority of cases. In two thirds of the sets (67 percent) repression leads to protest, whereas in 13 sets (72 percent) protest leads to repression. Hostile behavior from one actor is usually followed by hostile behavior from the other. It has also been argued that in democracies protest is less likely to lead to repression due to institutional and normative constraints. Table 2 shows that protest leads to repression in five (of six) democracies, in five (of eight) semi-democracies, and three (of four) autocracies. Although the difference between regime types is not particularly large, the hypothesis about the effect of regime type on the impact of protest on repression cannot be confirmed.

Regime type was also expected to influence the effect of repression on protest. Democracies were argued to be more

<sup>15</sup> This is based on the concept of Granger causality. The notion of Granger causality is that if a variable Y can be better predicted from past values of both X and Y than by past values of Y alone, then X Granger causes Y (Freeman 1983; Granger 1969; Pierce 1977).

<sup>16</sup> The detailed results for each case of the analysis can be obtained from the author upon request.



prone to experience protest as a response to repression, while such a link was hypothesized to be absent in autocracies. Of the 12 sets where repression was found to lead to protest (two thirds of the total sample), five are democracies (of the total of six democracies), five semi-democracies (out of eight), and two autocracies (out of four). Hence, repression leads to protest in all but one of the democracies but in only half of the autocracies, lending some support to the hypotheses on the role of regime type in the repression → protest link. Citizens in democracies generally resist hostile government behavior by taking protest actions themselves.

Note that in 9 of the 13 sets where protest leads to repression, repression also leads to protest. In most cases where the state retaliates against dissent, the government can expect the population to respond with further protest. This suggests that repression is not a very useful instrument for making a protesting opposition cooperate. Indeed in only 5 of the 18 sets (28 percent) does repression lead to dissident cooperation. Those five sets consist of only one democracy (of six democracies, i.e., 17 percent), but include two of the four autocracies. Particularly in democracies, hostile government behavior seems to be ineffective in soliciting cooperation from the opposition, but repression is more successful in autocracies as a tool to achieve an accommodating opposition. This suggests that in autocracies the opposition does not pursue a hard line against the government in the face of repression because it is too dangerous. However, in a democracy the opposition appears to be more confident in not giving in to the regime even in the face of hostile government actions. It can be speculated that in those regimes the opposition is more confident that negative state sanctions will not escalate so that the benefits of not cooperating with a hostile government outweigh the costs of pursuing a hard line.

Protest is similarly ineffective in achieving government accommodation, since government accommodation follows protest in only one third of the sets, without significant differences between the regime types. Government accommodation, however, was expected to lead to protest since an accommodating government can be perceived as increasing the benefits of dissent. This hypothesis is supported in only one third of the sets. Most of those are autocracies (three out of four autocracies). In autocracies, accommodating behavior by the government is more likely to be interpreted as a weakness that increases the benefits of protest and that is to be exploited. Stronger support is found for the argument that dissident accommodation *does not* lead to repression. In only 5 of the 18 sets does repression follow dissident accommodation (28 percent), hence the hypothesis is supported by over two thirds of the cases. When faced with a cooperating opposition, the domestic (in form of backlash) and international (in form of shaming and potential loss in trade) costs of repression generally outweigh the benefits. Note that two of the cases where repression follows dissident accommodation are autocracies (50 percent of the autocratic sets). Not surprisingly, autocracies seem to be less worried by the costs of using repression as a response to dissident accommodation than other regime types.

Finally, the analysis tested the arguments that both protest and repression are autoregressive and that accommodating behavior is persistent in democracies but not in autocracies. Protest at time  $t$  leads to protest at time  $t + 1$  in 17 of the total 18 set. This supports the argument that it is less costly to sustain a protest movement once the rebels have overcome the dilemma of collective action. Repression is found to be autoregressive in 14 sets (78 percent). Once the government begins to exhibit conflictual behavior toward the population, it is likely to continue to do so, but with interesting differences between regime types. Whereas repression is autoregressive in all autocracies, only four democracies (67 percent of democracies) and six semi-democracies (75 percent of semi-democracies) exhibit this pattern. Democratic norms and institutions seem to have at least some dampening effect on institutional inertia when the government shows hostile behavior towards the opposition, but, as one would expect, no such constraints are in place in autocracies.

Little support is found for the argument that accommodating behavior by the government is consistent over time, with state accommodation being autoregressive in 8 sets of the total 18. There are small differences between regime types; state accommodation is autoregressive in two thirds of democracies, whereas the same result is found in only half of the autocracies and a quarter of the semi-democracies. The inconsistency of institutional rules and roles in semi-democracies might lead to such sporadic behavior of the government, since it probably does not want to risk losing too much ground by consistently accommodating the opposition. Overall cooperative behavior plays a rather minor role in the interaction between the government and the population. It is not very well explained by the models and it does not have a strong or consistent effect on domestic conflict.<sup>17</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The study re-investigated the relationship between protest and repression. Theories on domestic conflict usually focus on one direction of the relationship, i.e., either on how protest affects repression or on how repression affects protest without taking into account the possibility of feedback loops. However, there is no strong theoretical foundation for deciding the direction of the causality between protest and repression. The analysis set out to show there is a reciprocal relationship between protest and repression.

Using daily data from six Latin American and three African countries between the late 1970s and early 1990s, the results suggest that protest and repression are indeed interdependent. In general, protest leads to repression and repression to protest. The results also showed that in most

<sup>17</sup> This might be influenced by the data generating process due to potential under-reporting of accommodating behavior since one could argue that journalists are likely to focus more on reporting conflict and confrontation than accommodation.

cases where protest leads to repression, repression also leads to protest and vice versa. Conflictual actions were shown to be quite consistent. Both protest and repression are autoregressive, suggesting that hostile behavior does not usually change from one day to the next. Taking into account cooperative behavior, the analysis showed that hostile actions by one actor generally do not solicit accommodating behavior by the other one.

Considering differences between democracies, semi-democracies, and autocracies, the results confirmed that democracies are more cooperative than other regime types. Governments in democracies were most likely to accommodate the opposition and, at the same time, were least likely to display continuous repressive behavior. Also, the level of hostile state actions was lowest in democracies and highest in semi-democracies. However, if faced with popular dissent, democracies were just as likely to respond with negative sanctions as other regime types. Looking at the ability of negative sanctions to solicit dissident cooperation, democracies had a particularly bad record. In only one of

six democracies repression led to dissident accommodation, compared to two out of four autocracies. In autocracies, hostile government behavior can sometimes successfully threaten the opposition into cooperation, but this approach is not particularly useful in democracies. Instead, democracies are more likely than other regime types to respond with dissent to negative state sanctions and repression.

As discussed elsewhere in more detail (Carey 2003), the differences in the present sample are more likely to be caused by actor-based differences, such as the position of the military in relation to the government, than macro-level indicators, such as economic development or growth. Future research might be able to help us to understand why some countries fall into certain categories of interaction. Further case studies would provide us with a more detailed picture of what drives domestic conflict and accommodation. More insights into the repression-protest link from both quantitative and qualitative research will hopefully allow us to assist policymakers more effectively to minimize the risk of violence and the escalation of conflict.

#### APPENDIX

NAME OF SET	TIME PERIOD	POLITY SCORES
Argentina I	1 April 1982–30 October 1983	–8
Argentina II	31 October 1983–31 December 1992	8 and 7
Brazil I	1 July 1983–15 January 1985	–3
Brazil II	16 January 1985–31 December 1992	7 and 8
Chile I	7 August 1983–4 October 1988	–6
Chile II	5 October 1988–15 December 1989	–1
Chile III	16 December 1989–30 October 1992	8
Colombia I	1 May 1983–31 December 1992	8 and 9
Mexico I	1 February 1984–13 July 1988	–3
Mexico II	14 July 1988–30 November 1992	0
Venezuela I	1 March 1983–3 February 1992	9 and 8
Nigeria I	1 January 1983–31 December 1983	7
Nigeria II	1 January 1984–3 May 1989	–7
Nigeria III	4 May 1989–31 December 1992	–5
Zaire I	1 January 1975–23 November 1990	–9
Zaire II	24 November 1990–31 December 1992	–8
Zimbabwe I	1 December 1974–30 June 1983 <sup>18</sup>	4 and 5
Zimbabwe II	1 July 1983–31 December 1985	1

Note: The data are taken from Polity IVd. The figures refer to the rounded number of years a particular polity case has persisted without a change in score of the polity variable up to the latest date observed by the data.

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<sup>18</sup> One might suggest that it would be more intuitive to divide the time periods for Zimbabwe into two sets before and after independence instead of using the polity-scale as a rule for choosing the sets. I used chow-tests to statistically determine whether there is a significant break in the time series when then Rhodesia became independent. However, the test was not statistically significant at the 0.5 level.

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